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C O P Y

(114.2)

1959-CRIWU

KNIXON to []

27 December 1951

Subject: Albanian Political Activities

1. It is the Sunday before Christmas and [] has been given a few days' respite by his Albanian charges. He has also been given time to reflect on the past year's activity in Rome. In so doing, he would like to record some opinions, a few facts, several prophecies.

A. Opinions

(1) The Balli Kombetar party has grown in strength (numerically and politically) during the past year. The Legitimists movement is no better, perhaps worse. The Agrarian movement is insignificant in numbers and even less in influence.

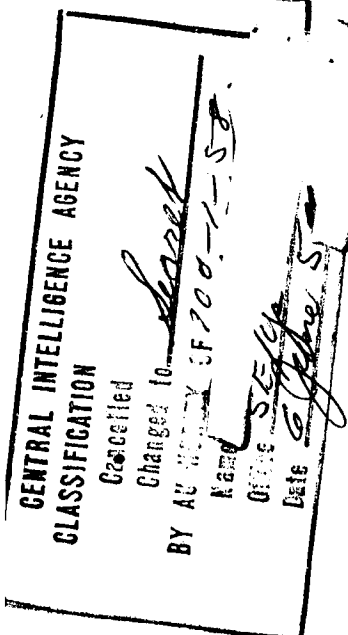
(2) The Balli Kombetar party leaders have been assured of even stronger backing by our British associates - if stronger backing is possible. (The outright flaunting of this influence has been particularly evident since the October election, which, unfortunately, coincided with the Rome Valuable-Friend meeting and the return to Rome of the BK party Secretary General from a two month visit in London. Thus, it is impossible to say whether one or a combination of the three events is responsible for the BK's obvious self-assurance.)

(3) The British are against any activity within, or any organization of, NCFA which would tend to strengthen that body. The very activities which might be staged, not only to strengthen NCFA, but to bring a greater measure of control over its activities, are the very things the British least desire, to wit: a Civil Affairs Committee to busy itself with plans beyond the actual day of liberation, occupation procedures, elections, etc., a Planning Committee to develop (under our control) the necessary agricultural, industrial, educational aid programs which will one day be necessary. To be sure, much of this goes beyond the fields of interest insofar as CIA-SIS are concerned, but the fact that Albanians, supposedly giving their all to the CIA-SIS effort, are busily engaged at this very moment in devising such programs, either privately or as members of Albanian political movements, is of primary CIA-SIS concern.

(4) Albanians respect force, and force alone. Out of every ten men who speak of democracy there are ten potential dictators, needing only weaker men in their presence to bring out their most ambitious tendencies.

(5) The British are attempting to promote a consolidation of the Yugoslav-Albanian Committee and the BK party aims - at least to the degree that the first mentioned would support a government dominated by BK's not unlike Tito's from an ideological standpoint and sympathetic to Tito's Yugoslav regime.

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(6) That the BK's may not be entirely in sympathy with this British intention, but fear the outright rejection of such a proposal might place their British backing in jeopardy, is evidenced by the propaganda line the BK's have just recently started campaigning, to wit: over one half of Albania is in Yugoslav hands and must be returned to Albania.

(7) Zog's strength is drawn from the confusion and weakness of a divided and unorganized house. He does not desire a unified, organized, powerful Legitimists political movement but prefers to retain the personal loyalties of the various group leaders within the disorganized movement. Zog views other political movements in the same manner and seeks to promote the same relationship with prominent Albanians in these ranks.

B. Facts

(1) No one Albanian with the necessary qualifications for individual leadership exists among [redacted] Albanian acquaintances.
[redacted] does not know Zog.)

(2) BK leadership is in the hands of four members of that party's Central Committee - Abas Ermenji, Halil Machi, and Vasil Andoni. Each has his individual function, but not one has the individual qualities of leadership. Ermenji is spokesman and idea sifter, not original in his thinking, but adept at screening and promoting ideas advanced by his associates. Ermenji is propagandist, quick-tempered and jealous. He is the watchdog for the party's interests, packager of the party's propaganda program. Machi is "the brain". Machi, a radical socialist, is probably number three man only for reasons of his health. Incapacitated much of the time, Machi is the man who guides the fortunes of the party. Fanatically socialist, Machi firmly believes that the people are not capable of determining what is good or bad and must be given only what qualified leaders like himself know is best. Andoni is the chewing gum man - holds his party's people together. Andoni is perhaps the ablest Albanian of [redacted] acquaintance, is probably a BK only because he feels it is less evil than the other movements. Andoni settles personal differences, does all of the hard labor required to keep the farflung party knitted into a compact political machine. Unfortunately, he is dominated by his three associates.)

(3) The BK's look upon themselves as a government in exile. The organizational structure for their government has been completed to the degree that an Albanian in Detroit has been designated Chief of Tirana Police.

(4) Zog's most trusted lieutenants (in Rome) do not know his exact intentions. Those who could assist in impeding the BK effort will not do so because they feel that a strengthening of their forces would be contrary to Zog's wishes. They feel

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that if and when Zog makes a move it will be along the lines of a coalition in which no one group will be too strong but the combined strength of all could easily cope with the BKs. Thus, Klissura, Kryeziu, Verlaci, and their like curse Zog one day for hampering their efforts and praise him the next when he tosses some worthless crumb their way.

(5) Battle lines are more clearly drawn each day within NCFA between the Maledicts on the one hand and Zog's adherents and "no place to go" sympathizers like Kryeziu, on the other.

(6) The BKs, with British support, are attempting to steal NCFA for the obvious reason that U.S. financial and operational support make it a force with which they could not compete, even with unlimited British backing.

C. Prophecies

(1) Within the next year the U.S. must have slowed the BK march to power or accept the fact that the party will be so firmly entrenched in NCFA that any effort placed behind NCFA will be nothing less than support of the BK party aims.

(2) Within the next year the U.S. may be forced to choose between Zog or the BKs (irrespective of NCFA) as the most likely future government of Albania and may be forced to support that body, either through a reorganization of NCFA to include or exclude certain elements, or in a clandestine fashion, such as the manner in which the British are supporting the BKs at this time.

(3) The U.S. must take a more realistic view toward Albania or stand the risk of losing the time, effort, and money being expended for what is known to be a worthy cause. What would certainly result, under present conditions, would be nothing less than civil war if the existing regime should fall and the Albanian groups now supported through NCFA were allowed to enter the country. The U.S., known as a sympathetic people (but who, by their own admission, have no axe to grind), are being played against the wall by a group of tin-horn politicians. It must be said of the British, who are aiding and abetting the BKs, that, right or wrong, official policy or dictated by and support is aimed only toward one end - "a regime subservient to British government".

2. It would be unfair to conclude this memorandum without advancing a few ideas which might be considered to counteract, or at least assist in solving, the problems stated. In opinion, we might do well to re-examine the structure and aims of NCFA. This may be elementary, but the types of people being dealt with make it necessary to deal in elementaries in such an analysis:

A. By and large, the types of Albanians at the disposal of CIA-SIS

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fall into four broad categories: (1) land owners, or beys; (2) well-educated but materially poor and formerly unimportant persons within and without the country prior to their exile; (3) opportunists who have found it to their best past interests to remain faithful to the beys; and (4) middle and lower class nationals who have done only a limited amount of thinking with respect to their "don't wants" - enough to realize that they don't want the Communists or the Zogs - and practically no thinking with respect to their "wants".

B. Many forces pull upon the typical Albanian exile mind. He is subject to pressure from the Italians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Zog, the various political leaders and the would-be political leaders in exile, and, if he's a Catholic, the Vatican. He knows little about the U.S. aims toward his country. He is almost entirely dependent upon those with whom he comes in contact to do his thinking for him. Unless this typical Albanian is among the more fortunate, he is also concerned about food, shelter, clothing, and a means to "affront life", not to mention the family he may have left behind.

C. Our Albanian thus becomes a likely target (at least a good listener) for any pressure group from which he might conceivably improve his lot in life without placing his future in "too much" jeopardy.

D. It is out of such material, then, that NCFA was originally constructed and, although it is now sad to admit, NCFA unwittingly partitioned the exile mind. On the one hand, it offered security for the present without jeopardy of the future insofar as national integrity was concerned. On the other hand, it failed to advance a concrete and understandable program beyond the demise of the present regime.

E. Thus, a part of the Albanian mind became susceptible to the political movement or leader who could fill in that space left vacant by NCFA's inability to promise anything beyond the right of the people to choose their own form of government.

F. Recognizing the opportunity at hand, the BKs moved forward swiftly with a complete set of plans for the future Albania. (Some members of the BK party, not being in complete sympathy with the program advocated by the socialist professor faction of the party, were read out of the movement and became the Klissura splinter faction.) The Legitimists, caught at a disadvantage, simply stepped up their propaganda program, advocating a return to the Zog government. The Kryeziu movement, caught at an even worse disadvantage, a paper organization of very limited strength and no program, sought to combat the BKs in two ways, (1) a coalition with the BK splinter movement and other groups outside NCFA, And (2) a recruitment program to raise its numerical strength.

G. The BKs, somewhat overcome by the success of their program and finding that they had a most salable product - a social state

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lying between Communism and capitalism and far removed from Zogism - merely stepped up their propaganda and established a well oiled recruiting machine which is now worldwide in scope.

H. Whether the BKs approached the British, or vice versa, or whether it is the deep seated hatred the radical professors hold for capitalism, is not known, but out of this maelstrom came the present British-BK partnership, which is aimed at complete domination of NCFA.

3. If this analysis is believed, then the U.S. would seem to be faced with these alternatives:

A. Broaden NCFA, to minimize the BK strength, present an NCFA definitive program for the period beyond the day of liberation, create committees to study and submit recommendations dealing with that phase of the Valuable-Enemy operation.

B. Force the BKs resignation from NCFA. (They cannot long compete with NCFA without backing.)

C. Obtain Zog's permission for the Legitimists party to become an independent political movement with its monarchist aims supplanted by a platform calling for free elections, territorial integrity, etc., much like the aims of NCFA, and back that party with U.S. support just as the British are supporting the BKs. (In making such a concession, Zog would naturally have to be assured that at a later date the Legitimists political movement could still support him without acting contrary to the party's professed aims.)

D. Create friction between Hasan Dosti and the professor group of the BKs (the professors are open in their contempt of him now), join Dosti and Klissura as the recognized NCFA-Dosti faction and read the professor group out of NCFA.

4. Obviously, all of these proposals are fraught with danger, but the only serious danger is a possible break-up of the British-U.S. partnership. (Should this occur, however, there is no question but what all factions other than the Dostis would string along with the U.S. For example, Abas Kupi, upon his recent return from Egypt, was open in his admiration of the [] Zog relationship and, unless the British can pull a rabbit out of the hat, they have lost the strong man in the Legitimists movement. Thus, Kryeziu, who is adamant in his dislike for the British, and Abas Kupi, Gago Gogo, along with Nuci Kotta, and possibly Hasan Dosti, would remain loyal to NCFA regardless of British action.)

5. Thus, it would seem that the best of the four alternatives, or a combination of the four, resulting in the maximum benefits with the minimum of risk, is the logical step to be taken by the U.S.

6. [] seriously doubts that broadening the Committee is worthy of further consideration at this time. Two attempts to do so during the past fourteen months have failed. In both instances, the U.S.

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lost face. In both instances, the BKs increased their stature with the rank and file Albanians by proclaiming the fact that they made the U.S. back down. With the upper crust, the important Albanians, the British gained by letting it become known that they stopped the U.S.'s evil plans. Furthermore, Albanians who did support the U.S. in the past might be reluctant to do so in the future since they have been burned twice (even though they are in reality the ones who brought the pot to a boil, they are happy to see someone else shoulder the blame).

7. Neither does [] believe that reading the BKs, as such, out of NCFA offers a lasting solution. The time to do this would be if and when it were decided to back Zog. Furthermore, such a move would surely present the maximum danger of a British-U.S. break-up.

8. [] thus believes that parts of "A" and "D" and all of "C" below offer the best solution to the problem.

A. Present an NCFA definitive program beyond the day of liberation; create committees to conduct NCFA, rather than independent political movement study of the problems inherent in this period.

C. Obtain Zog's permission for the Legitimists party to become an independent political movement with its monarchist aims supplanted by a platform calling for free elections, territorial integrity, etc., much like the aims of NCFA, and back that party with U.S. support just as the British are supporting the BKs. (If such a move were made, [] would propose that the Legitimists party paper, publication of which was discontinued several months ago, be resumed. In the first issue, the leading editorial on page 1 would explain the new aims of the movement, with a note to the effect that: (a) while the movement has been a loyal supporter for Zog in the past, Zog is not now engaged in any political activity; (b) the leaders of Legitimists feel that a strong democratic movement is essential at this time to counteract the many political movements which are gaining strength outside the country and whose aims are not always for the best interests of Albania; (c) that at a later date Zog might wish to re-enter the political picture and the Legitimists movement might wish to support his activity if such activity were in keeping with the democratic aims of the Legitimists movement.....This would leave the door open for overt support of Zog at any time in the future.)

D. Start an effort, at least, to break Hasan Dosti away from the BK party, at the same time collecting irrefutable evidence against the professor group which will make their position completely indefensible by their British backers.

9. In closing, [] would state that he is already in possession of some such evidence in "D" above. Halil Meniku, of the BKs was taunted into making the admission that his group is receiving a thousand pounds each month from the British to cover expenses of their newspaper, news bulletin, and public relations (recruiting) activities. [] hopes to get him to repeat the statement on a hidden recorder.)

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Halil Meniku, who is known to lose his temper and talk too freely, also stated, "We can give [] back all of the dirty U.S. dollars he has given us. We don't need their filthy money." - or words to that effect. Another BK spokesman has said, "When [] got in our way, we got rid of him. The same thing could happen to []"

10. [] also in possession of a group picture taken at the NCFA Independence Day party, paid for by the U.S., at Bagnoli this past month. All the children in the front row of the picture are displaying the special Independence Day edition of the BK party newspaper.

11. And the British speak of the disloyalty of Kryeziu to NCFA.

Approved: []

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